An official website of the United States government Here's how you know

stopbullying.gov

Who Is at Risk

No single factor puts a child at risk of being bullied or bullying others. Bullying can happen anywhere—cities, suburbs, or rural towns. Depending on the environment, some groups—youth with disabilities and socially isolated youth—may be at an increased risk of being bullied. Stigma can also spread false and harmful information that can lead to increasing rates of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against certain groups of people.

Children at Risk of Being Bullied

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider "cool"
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem
- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention

However, even if a child has these risk factors, it doesn't mean that they will be bullied.

Children More Likely to Bully Others

There are two types of kids who are more likely to bully others:

- Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of

others.

- Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others.

Children who have these factors are also more likely to bully others;

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement or having issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

Remember, those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources—popularity, strength, cognitive ability—and children who bully may have more than one of these characteristics.

Additional Resources

That Long Pause was Really a Seizure: Understanding Epilepsy and Bullying

Date Last Reviewed: February 3, 2025

Was this page helpful?

Yes
No

Form Approved OMB# 0990-0379 Exp. Date 10/31/2026